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Alex Villalobos, a former Republican state-senate majority leader from Florida had this to say about the efforts to privatize education: "If the issue is you have failing public schools, then how is taking more money away from public education and giving it to private entities that are not accountable going to help public schools?" My experience says it won't. **We shouldn't fund new charter schools. We should reallocate those dollars via ECS to public schools.**

And this is why....

1993 (February). I began my position as principal of Israel Putnam Elementary School in Meriden. There was one Reading Teacher on staff to serve an urban school of 600 plus students.

1995. Title I funds were redistributed to the schools based on a measure of poverty. We had money to hire additional staff.

1997. We had 5 additional paraprofessionals working under the direction of that Reading Teacher and an additional Reading Recovery Teacher to provide researched-based, individualized and small group Early Intervention in Reading.

1998. We were awarded the Exemplary Reading Program Award by the Connecticut Reading Association, based on our instructional practices and resulting test scores.

Connecticut Mastery Test results – Grade 4	1993	1997
We INCREASED the percentage of students above the EXCELLENCE Standard	33%	50%
We DECREASED the percentage of students below the INTERVENTION Standard	42%	28%
We accomplished these improvements at the same time that our measure of POVERTY INCREASED	30%	42%

**Better funding meant better outcomes for students.** After 1998 the State provided Early Reading Success funds and we were able to add yet another Reading Teacher to provide services.

2004 (Spring). I retired.

2004 (Fall). Title I funds were reduced. Based on No Child Left Behind legislation, funds were redirected away from high-need public schools.

- Funds could be used to provide transportation for students in a "failing" school to a school of choice.
- Funds were given to private entities to provide after-school intervention..

In yet another blow to “failing “ schools, the State ended funding of the Early Reading Success funds for Priority School districts.

The difference in support staffing is starkly different today.

<b>Israel Putnam Elementary School Support for Student Reading Achievement</b>	
<b>2004</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	
3.0 Reading Teachers	2.0 Reading Teachers
5.0 Reading Paraprofessionals	0.0 Reading Paraprofessionals
.5 Library Media Specialist	0.125 Library Media Specialist
<b>Reading Teacher Assignment</b>	
Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one or small group reading instruction DAILY beginning Day 2 of school and ending Day 182</li> <li>• Need-based coaching and consultation for classroom teachers</li> </ul>	Provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group reading instruction</li> <li>• Media Classes for Grade 1 – 3</li> <li>• Scheduled coaching for all classroom teachers</li> <li>• Write Curricula to align with the CCSC</li> </ul>

2006. Student outcomes reflect the reduced staffing. The following chart compares the percentage of student BELOW PROFICIENT on the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade CMT: a 23% increase in students who “failed” the CMT.

Year	%
1997	28%
2006	51%

SO - If the issue is you have underperforming public schools, does it make sense to take money away from public education and to give it to private entities that are not accountable? The evidence says “no.”

**Therefore, please reallocate those dollars budgeted for charter schools to our non-charter public schools.**

Thank you.